The Commonweal

March 24, 1950

Revolution in the Valley

Claire Huchet Bishop

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Christian Democrats of the Left

Leo J. Wollemborg

Man Versus Scientism

Alan Devoe

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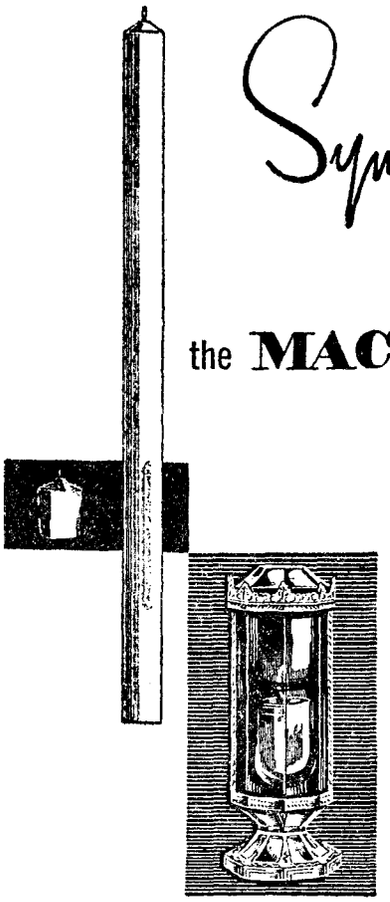

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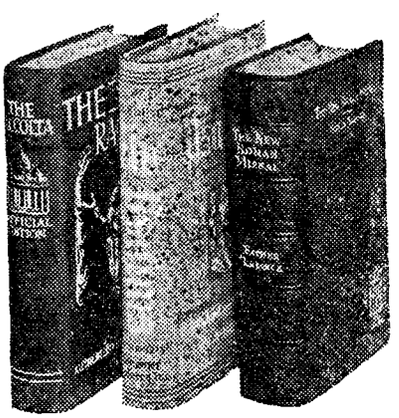

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Maiden Voyage of the Olympic Flame

ON THE waterfront these days every seaman's and longshoreman's job counts. In the past three years the number of vessels sailing under National Maritime Union deep-sea contracts has been cut in half. Of the half million men with seamen's certificates in this country, only 100,000 are now said to have jobs on ships. Dues-paying membership in the NMU has dropped off forty percent. All this is due to the discontinuance of wartime and extraordinary post-war shipments and to the fact that Russian expansion and the cold war are constantly cutting down the number of ports to which American ships may sail.

Unemployment in such numbers threatens the very existence of the National Maritime Union. It explains why the issue of the hiring halls—still illegal under Taft-Hartley — is so crucial now. With five men available for every job, it would be a cinch for companies, picking their crews by the "shape-up," or any other free-wheeling method of hiring, to discriminate against union members and eventually beach the whole NMU. Under the rotary hiring hall system every union member gets a chance at a job in his turn. Joe Curran's recent appearance before a Senate Labor subcommittee dramatized the need to legalize maritime hiring halls.

It was in this atmosphere of desperation (heightened by the pitched battles for control of the NMU) that idle seamen in Baltimore learned that thirty-nine German sailors had been flown there to man the 28,000-ton Olympic Flame on her maiden voyage for the Olympic Oil Lines. It seems that the supply of Greek seamen with "high-pressure" experience had run out, so this Panamanian company—which is leasing the new super-tanker, built by Bethlehem Steel, to the Texas Oil Company—had to send for Germans who knew how.

While the latter sat around a Baltimore YMCA waiting to embark, it was discovered that they would be paid one-fourth the wage of American seamen with comparable ratings. The shipping papers of an able-bodied seaman of the German crew called for a wage of $53.57 per month, whereas the standard wage on American vessels for a man with that rating is $226.

The indignant NMU men in Baltimore faced several alternatives: beating up the Germans; picketing and trying to take over the ship; picketing the offices of the National Maritime Commission; demanding a Congressional investigation. Reason and statesmanship in the person of John J. Smith, the NMU local agent, won out after two strenuous hours. The German fellow-workers were not to be molested. The men put their faith in a Congressional investigation.

Perhaps the dodge of shifting American vessels to foreign registry may have been justified in the period during which we wanted to ship supplies to the Allies without going to war. Now, this subterfuge is enabling certain American companies to deprive our seamen of jobs and a living wage. It is important that the confidence of these Baltimore NMU men in the nation's sense of justice and our orderly processes be upheld through an investigation of maritime hiring.

Unfinished Debate

A FEW months ago Dr. Hermann Sander, a hard-working, devoted small-town physician in New Hampshire, was unknown outside his community. Last week newsreel audiences all over the U. S. watched Dr. Sander kiss his wife and heard him say a few grateful words to those who stood by him in his recent court-room ordeal. The suave physician and his wife both looked a little uncomfortable in roles usually associated with Sweepstake winners, but they were pleasantly cooperative about playing the game. Temporarily at least, Dr. Sander had become a public figure, and the newsreel people have definite ideas of how headline personalities should act. The condemned hide their faces as they step into a patrol-wagon (Judith Coplon followed Dr. Sander in the newsreel and she too was cooperative) while the freed kiss their wives and thank their lawyers.

The Sander trial was covered by hundreds of reporters and famous feature writers. It was

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• NEXT WEEK •

THOMAS MERTON writes on "Self-Denial and the Christian."

"God demands that all Christians deny themselves but He does not ask the same kind of renunciation from a housewife with ten children to look after as from a Cistercian monk. In the long run, it might well happen that the housewife might turn out to be more mortified than the monk: but she is not expected to do penance in exactly the same way."

expected to be the journalistic event of the year. In a way it was. But, unexpectedly, the trial itself turned out to be something of a flop. The stage was set, the cast assigned roles, but something went wrong with the script. Dr. Sander wasn't a mercy-killer after all. When the editors sent their finest to New Hampshire, they thought euthanasia would be on trial. Dr. Sander's lawyer didn't argue along those lines. He argued that Dr. Sander wasn't any kind of killer, that he didn't in fact kill Abbie Barroto, mercifully or any other way. When the jury brought the verdict in, they agreed.

It still remains for euthanasia to go on trial. "This is the perfect case," an official of the Euthanasia Society of America said when the Sander story broke. Things didn't work out that way, though the trial did bring the question into the public consciousness and set off a sharp debate.

When the matter of mercy-killing is finally argued, it will of necessity be a religious issue. All Catholics and perhaps a majority of Protestants and Jews, precisely because they believe in their faiths, will be on one side; lined up against them will be some men and women of other religious belief or no religious belief. They will all argue about the legal, medical and practical aspects of euthanasia. But primarily and fundamentally, they will be arguing because they believe mercy-killing is moral or immoral, because they believe it is wrong or right in the sight of God. It will be a political issue, of course, as the Jewish genocide was a political matter in Nazi Germany. Yet, inescapably, the real issue will be religious. Religion and politics sometimes get inextricably joined, as in birth-control, sterilization and inter-racial marriage legislation. All the pious talk in the world about keeping the two separate doesn't change matters.

A Catholic citizen, taking his rightful role in public discussions, still remains a Catholic and a citizen. It is too much to ask him to leave his Catholicism, his deepest convictions, behind. He has a right, and a duty to himself and his country, to act as a whole man—a citizen and a Catholic; better, a citizen who is a Catholic. These are the terms of his citizenship. He is accepted for what he is. As such he will wholeheartedly oppose any euthanasia legislation.

In matters like the debate over mercy killing, Catholics are sometimes accused of injecting a religious note into the discussions, of splitting the nation along religious lines, of being an unwholesome, divisive force. But euthanasia is a religious issue. Catholics didn't make it one. By its very terms it involves questions of religious attitudes and personal morality. The Catholic who thinks it is immoral and evil has no choice but to say so. And the nation *is* divided along religious lines. That is very clear whenever a

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religious question arises. At such times religious debate is inevitable. There is every reason, though, why it should be carried on in an atmosphere of reason and calm mutual regard between Americans. Nobody wins when our religious differences become our religious hatreds.

Japan's No-Prosperity Sphere

SINCE the surrender, the United States has kept the Japanese economy going. It could not be otherwise. With more than seventy million people and far too little arable land, Japan is dependent on large food imports for subsistence. Such principal pre-war markets as China, India, and Latin America no longer buy her textiles, one of her chief exports. Besides, her cotton industry has been slow to recover. The goal set for this year is to reach one-third the number of spindles whirling there ten years ago.

As far as the textile industry is concerned, Japan is trying to increase her exports and bring them into balance with imports in two ways: through new markets for her fabrics in Indonesia, Africa, Hong Kong and Siam; through sales of her textile machinery itself in India, Pakistan, Burma, Siam and Central and South America. Lack of purchasing power in her new trading areas and the eventual foreign competition that her textile machinery sales will lead to do much to limit the potentialities of this program.

There is an even more serious rub in the case of heavy industry. It is here that the loss in trade with China is most deeply felt. American occupation authorities understandably block shipments which might be of military use to Mao's China—especially railroad equipment.

Even with her Manchurian conquest, aggressive export policies and intense domestic austerities, the Japanese barely made a painful go of things before the war. It will be markedly more difficult for her under postwar limitations. Full-scale trade with China is one answer. Another is further large subsidies from the United States. A third is some modification of Point IV so that the Japanese can contribute a major share of the machinery and the know-how in the partial industrialization of undeveloped regions.

Each course has decided drawbacks. Even if the Russians permit Japan to revive her industry through trade with China, it is doubtful whether building up Communist China in this fashion would be advisable, even though the strongest economic currents will press in this direction. Yet, American taxpayers can hardly look with equanimity on the prospect of perennial outlays of present dimensions to bolster the Japanese economy. But everything will have to break just right for the Japanese if they are to be able to maintain themselves without sizable help. Finally, if the Japanese are to assume a leading role in the Point IV program, that would whittle down the participation of American enterprise considerably. But before over-all policy is set, this last is a possibility that should be carefully explored in the interest of stabilizing conditions in the Far East.

The Slight Pause

AFTER his first evening of television, one man remarked, "It may safely be said that one can live a full life and die a happy death without any of that." Two recent surveys of high-school students indicate that young people do not have this same spirit of detachment.

In Stamford, Connecticut, a survey at Burdick Junior High School (a school that is roughly representative of Stamford economically and socially) shows that students are spending twenty-seven hours a week at the television set. This is precisely fifty-five minutes a week less than the students are required to spend in their classes.

Seventy-nine percent of the students regularly see television. Half the students have sets in their homes. A majority, from time to time, will have their supper while watching a program.

In Roselle, New Jersey, another of the surveys which have been made in the past few months has found that the grades of students who see TV regularly have dropped an average of over 15%.

These surveys are producing the first facts about the impact video is having in homes. The principal at Burdick said that the figures, as far as they go, speak for themselves. "Television presents new problems for all of us, but the first step toward their solution lies in a better national understanding of this newest and most novel medium. . . ." Reinhold Niebuhr has been more blunt. He has said that our culture will be further vulgarized and "much of what is still wholesome in our life will perish under the impact of the new visual aid."

What is disturbing about video is its power. It demands complete attention. It is our weakness that we crave distraction—to have a good reason to avoid the reality of this moment. Radio music has often become meaningless to us, nothing more than a cushioning noise. It is pleasant to find a chair and permit the mind to be gently distracted for an average of 3.86 hours a day. And television is the most amazingly efficient distraction man has ever produced.

How responsible are the people who control the thing? The broadcasters say that they have a duty and obligation to the public, and they

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leave it pretty much at that. There is no particular reason to think that television will be more (nor, for that matter, less) constructive in its programing than radio. Circumstances are largely the same, although the networks are making a greater effort to own and produce their programs this time, keeping that responsibility from the advertising agencies. But the advertisers furnish the funds, and the power of television is ultimately in their hands. Perhaps the good clean game of not taking advantage of the public too much (you can't *lie*) will break down, and the industry will really go to work with the techniques it has. It is not quite a joke that the Army reserve officers in the New York Area who are employed in the public relations field, are assigned to a psychological warfare unit.

But perhaps we are calamity-howling. History proves that human beings can learn to get along well with almost anything. Human resilience is proving itself even now. The students have worked out techniques for doing homework and watching video simultaneously. One boy in Roselle even said it "strengthens my powers of concentration." It may also make him grow up schizoid.

Playing for Keeps

WHEN the State Department and the nation's press conducted their separate post-mortem investigations into the death of democratic China, the findings were not what one would call scientifically satisfying or conclusive. No one found the exact cause of death or the point where the knife went in. Mr. Acheson took a thousand pages or so to report that something was rotten in Chungking; some of the press concurred in this, some thought that our own State Department had not acted in time, that it had been badly fooled by what Secretary Acheson has called Communist aggression dressed up as agrarian reform.

Among all the explanations, each of which contained a part of the truth at least, was one that went this way: we lost China because we had never taken the Asiatic peoples seriously. We were used to thinking of them as the Yellow Peril, as Chinks and Japs, as laundrymen and houseboys. In our minds, all Asia was a sprawling, dirty area off by itself, the slum of the world, inhabited by strange little men, second-class creatures.

Having this attitude, conscious or sub-conscious as it was, we could not take the Asiatics seriously; we knew little of their culture, or of what was going on in their minds, or of what political currents were running back and forth in their countries. Somehow it didn't matter.

Suddenly, when China collapsed, it did matter. Again a lot of far-off places began turning up in the news, vague pieces of geography like Indo-China, Malaya, Thailand; once before, in a total war, we had had to look up the Eniwetoks and the Saipans, places where, in a modern world, Americans had to die to win what had once been won at Bull Run or at Verdun.

Now, Secretary Acheson advises, we need to adjust our thinking again and to see the world as a theater for "total diplomacy." In the political contest between the free and slave nations, we win or lose ground as we win or lose it in open war. There are no more remote corners of the earth; what happens in Tibet affects the chances a man has to survive in Brooklyn.

Aware of this, Mr. Acheson has the State Department busy on a new American policy for Asia. As yet, he is not ready to submit a "single package" program of aid to the non-Communist countries there. Instead our approach is piecemeal. The other day, for example, Secretary Acheson asked Congress to set aside $100,000,000 to help the Republic of Korea, where, since 1945, we have invested nearly a billion dollars in an effort to keep the Communists out of the southern half of this peninsula, the last small foothold the free world has on the north-Asian mainland. "We should continue the Korean program," said Mr. Acheson, "as a symbol of what we can do for other countries pursuing a democratic policy."

But it was in the Korean Assembly, when Mr. Jessup was there recently, that the Koreans themselves told him that they could not understand our hesitant, piecemeal policy. As a symbol of what we can do, it is apparently a weak, vacillating and uninspired sign of our intentions.

Secretary Acheson has been unwilling to organize a single package program because he fears that the Asiatics will misunderstand it, that they will interpret it as imperialism. He favors waiting until the Asiatics come to us. But he has not explained why it is not possible for us to set up something in the line of a Pacific Recovery Program and leave it up to the Asiatics to join or not to join. As it is now, no one is taking effective action. There is little or no leadership. It is not simply a matter of money. The non-Communist forces in Asia are morally dejected and scattered, without even an articulated set of purposes and ideals to fight for.

Unless the State Department's new Asia policy can inspire faith and a sense of unity among the free peoples of Asia, we can expect more disasters in the Pacific. Already, time has run out in Asia. As Secretary Acheson says of his total diplomacy: "We are struggling against an adversary that is deadly serious. We are in a situation where we are playing for keeps."

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Revolution in the Valley

A French priest transforms an Alpine valley into a place where people live and work together.

Claire Huchet Bishop

THEY say: "And what is it you went to see in Europe?"

"The Communities of Work."

"What are they, religious organizations?"

"No, they are part of the communitarian movement."

"What? Is that communism?"

More and more it seems that we shall have to do away with all English words stemming from the Latin root *communis*. Why not strike them all from the dictionary? Then we might have a little peace with ourselves, unless we see red again every time we hear that somebody is sharing something with somebody else. But up there, in the luminous valley of the Champsaur, in the Alps, a priest said: "Wheat requires a certain climate. So does the soul: it is openness toward the neighbor." Abbé Poutrain is helping a whole French valley to become communitarian.

He is powerfully built, and looks like an unassuming country priest in his forties. When he speaks his hands move slowly. You would swear he could not set fire to anything. But he can start a fire all right, and he knows how to coax it along, too.

He is from the north of France. In the late thirties he was sent to this valley in the higher Alps because of his health. He was supposed to take it easy. But how could he? He found he had few parishioners and that those who still came to church did it much more through ignorance and fear than through manly faith. He says: "I wanted to make saints of them. I found out you have to be men first."

The local conditions were new to him. He was used to the industrial north of France. Here the peasants were sacrificed to the soil. Property was so divided that no one had enough to make a proper living the year around. In many cases they could not even marry any more: the man did not have enough land to raise a family, and the land of the girl's father had to support the rest of her family. So the girls had taken to the city and now the men also were going, and the valley was dying out. That the valley should die out was sad, but the exodus was not in itself a bad sign. It meant that the youth had still some ambition and energy. As Abbé Poutrain puts it: "Had not the exodus taken place we ourselves would have had to make it happen. Spiritual progress does not take place apart from economic progress." But they were totally unprepared for the life which awaited them outside the valley. So their choice was no choice at all. The problem was not one of preventing them from leaving, not of trying to hold them to the soil in servitude. "On the contrary," says Abbé Poutrain, "what had to be developed was a liberating crusade. We had to help them get a start toward a way of living which would eventually enable them to choose freely and knowingly what they wanted to do."

He did not quite know how to start this campaign, and, as he says, he fumbled a good deal until finally he landed in social work. After several years of learning much by trial and error he discovered for himself the importance, in the present day set-up, of what might be called the mass-production revolution. In 1943, he finally hit on what he thought "not necessarily the best but at least the surest and shortest road" for his crusade.

Meanwhile the war and the occupation had taken place and Abbé Poutrain had joined the Resistance. He was caught and sent to Buchenwald. Even in that ghoulish place he could not forget the problems of the Champsaur Valley.

★

WHEN the war was over, everyone in the Champsaur Valley thought Abbé Poutrain was dead and they set a time for a Requiem Mass to be said at Gap, the nearest town. That very day the radio suddenly boomed the news: Abbé Poutrain had been recognized in a prisoners' train passing through Lausanne. The Mass for the dead was changed to a Te Deum.

And then he picked up where he had left off. The thing to do was "to create economic conditions which open into Christianity." And that he could not do alone.

The valley was still almost medieval. No train, no industry. What had to be done was to

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CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP, *author of "France Alive," spent last fall in Europe studying the communitarian movement. She is working on a book about these communities, which will be published by Harper later this year.*

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reorganize the very basis of human work.

I said: "Could you not have found a far-sighted capitalist who, together with some able executives, would have set this whole valley to work?"

"Of course. But I certainly did not want that. Who can still believe that economic conditions created by capitalism open into Christianity?"

He had heard of the Community of Work at Boimondau. And a chance meeting brought him in contact with Pouzol, a young man who had worked in youth centers; he, too, had heard of Barbu's communitarian experiment and he was by profession a cabinet-maker, having graduated from the famous Boule school in Paris. A man with the soul of an apostle and the practical sense of a manual worker.

Slowly the project took shape. What was needed was a new economic structure adaptable to the valley, a structure which the young people could build themselves and through which they would get the whole round training necessary for their own liberation. Then they would be able to choose freely and knowingly the path of their life.

Pouzol could teach them furniture-making for several winters. This technical formation would make them independent professionally. At first it would have to be on an artisan scale, out of sheer necessity, since none of the young peasants knew the trade. But it would be only temporarily so, because one cannot go back; ours is an industrial world. However, the furniture-making plant could not be built in a day. The young men would gradually create it along new lines of thought: "Individual well-being does not exist without collective well-being," says Abbé Poutrain.

Of course there had to be a certain amount of money. Not capitalism, but capital. Abbé Poutrain called first on the notables a few miles around: doctors, lawyers, professors. Twenty people in all. He asked them to lend the prestige of their names to the formation of a Society legally constituted which would act nominally as the proprietor of the plant but would receive no dividends. Furthermore, the members of the Society would agree that, as the workers came of age, they would be allowed to enter the Society so that they would eventually outnumber the original founders, thereby insuring in time the workers' ownership of the means of production.

★

HAVING obtained the necessary legal and moral backing, Abbé Poutrain next called on the peasants of the valley. "What about that money in the wardrobe, under the sheet? And that box buried under the cherry tree?" Of course it was natural enough that they would not trust their savings to the banks or to the government or to an outsider who might come to own the valley. But what about loaning it to the Society La Drac-Séveraise? Yes, what about it? The Society was going to help a group of young peasants to start a furniture plant. Was there a better place for the present savings? "And"—this was in order to break all resistance and hesitation—"you can have your money back whenever you wish."

So it started. Pouzol began training the young men, which did not mean only the technical training, far from it, but a whole education along communitarian lines. That was the harder task. The young men were not interested. Like children who do not want to grow up, like slaves satisfied with a good master, like workers pleased with just high wages, so are we when apprenticeship in liberty is made available to us.

Pouzol had his problems, and so had Abbé Poutrain. One after another the peasants and lenders of money would come to him: "Monsieur l'Abbé, this is the day of the cattle fair at such and such a place. And of course, you will understand, that money we lent you—we would like it back. Guess we will have to take it right now since we are now on our way to the fair." What was the three percent to them? Safer to buy a cow now, even if it meant selling it again later. "That way we will know if we can trust him. He said we can have our money back anytime, didn't he?"

But Abbé Poutrain was not to be put out. "You would like your money right away? Here it is. Come around again when you decide to sell that cow." With a smile and a handshake. And after they were gone, he would quickly throw himself into his old car. "Now who shall I call on to replace those 200,000 francs?"

The peasants kept it up for several months. Then it gradually died down. Abbé Poutrain breathed a little easier. And so did Pouzol. After all, lumber had to be paid for.

★

FINANCIALLY, the first year was nil. The men were learning. The second year the sales volume was 3,000,000 francs. The third year 6,000,000. Now in their fourth year, they are on the way to making 1,000,000 a month.

From the communitarian point of view, they did not wake up until a year after the opening of the plant, but from then on they moved fast. They spent night after night studying the "Rule" of other Communities of Work. They have come out now with their own Rule. I think their declaration of principles is worth quoting since I have not found them expressed quite in the same way anywhere else:

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> We have decided to leave this torn-away, disorganized, rotted world in the hands of those who are trying to halt its destruction. We have resolved to construct quietly, without publicity, a healthy living cell, in order to bear witness to other men that it is still possible to live and to build.

This sounds almost like a group of perfectionists retiring within their own perfect little ghetto. But the men of the Community of Work Boisalpes quickly add:

> Our action is based on the economic evolution of the Champsaur, on the equilibrium between industrial and agricultural production, and on the alternating of these activities. We consider the Champsaur the natural community in which our own Community of Work is integrated.

Regarding the financial situation they are very explicit:

> We acknowledge the legal backing of the Society La Drac-Séveraise and accept the Society as temporary owner of the means of production, for which we agree to pay the Society a just rent. This is an exceptional arrangement which does not mean we disavow the principle that the means of production belong to the Community of Work, since in our case it is work which buys capital.
>
> As implied, no dividends will be paid since the community is opposed to the capitalist system and particularly to the reproducing of money by money.

The common ethical minimum and the pledge of each companion resemble those of other communities. The aim of the Community of Work is expressed in forceful and unequivocal terms:

> The aim of our Community of Work is to make possible for man a fullness of growth.
>
> Knowing that man grows fully only within a group, that selfishness is a dangerous and nonlasting means to help oneself, considering that solidarity is the surest guarantee of security, the companions pledge themselves to work for the creation of new communities.

As for the gradual transformation of the furniture-making plant from an artisan to an industrial firm, it is already on the way. The plant is being organized on a production line basis: time-motion, assembly-line technique, scientifically planned. It is not the professional technique which makes a full-fledged companion, but his total human value: mental and physical capacities, ability to grasp the importance of the communal good and to work for it.

WHEN I visited Boisalpes there were between twenty and thirty companions. Those who work the year-around go up to their farms for the week-ends, while the others, who work only during the off season, go back all during the summer. People on the farms like to hear about Boisalpes. After all did they not lend around 20,000,000 francs to its legal support? But it is not so much what the companions say; it is the way they *are*.

Tomorrow—perhaps they have done it already since I left—they will buy one tractor instead of hurrying to invest their own money in their own exclusive machine and the tractor will belong to the agricultural Community of Work. Then the time will come when the young men who choose to stay in the Champsaur Valley can marry because the parceling of the ground will have ceased to mean servitude, since they will be able to make part of their own living at the Community of Work free from any exploitation.

Of course, the awakening of the valley could have been done in another way, by money, and an able manager. But that would have been an artificial awakening, like a stimulant which prevents one from sleeping. The prosperity that such a venture engenders for a time always rests on the exploitation of man and, therefore, kills his soul.

The awakening of the valley can also be done in another way. By imposing on the people a new regime whereby they will be compelled to do things in common. It is easy to see that to educate them toward getting together willingly, through their own personal effort, to come of themselves to share material advantages, is a much higher order than one enforced by a dictator.

It is through the very existence of Boisalpes that the peasants of the Champsaur Valley are led to think all over again about the conditions of their existence and to start moving toward a communitarian way of living—that is, says Abbé Poutrain, "toward the meaning of the value of man. If Communism triumphs tomorrow we have to be ready to be within it a ferment of progress and renovation. Religious concern cannot be imposed upon people nor dictated. It grows out of an atmosphere, a climate, not out of discussions of doctrines. Our work is non-confessional and with no political intent. The value of a work of love lies in itself. We have to work voluntarily, with all our heart and strength, for a liberty and a plentitude which are not based on outmoded individualism, but on persons united communitarily. 'When two or three are gathered together in my name. . . .' When we get together to make humanity bloom, He is in the midst of us."

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Christian Democrats of the Left

Young professors try to rouse Italy's governing party out of its lethargy.

Leo J. Wollemborg

SIGNOR De Gasperi is generally a very patient man. The Italian Premier's patience and natural genius for delay and compromise are largely responsible, in fact, for his own political fortune and for the success of the Christian Democratic party. One day last December, however, Signor De Gasperi's celebrated patience seemed to desert him altogether. Banging on the table, he shouted: "Enough of this! You are subjecting me to an examination, but I have already passed my test before Parliament!"

Was the Italian Premier's outburst caused by another attack from his Communist foes? No. Signor De Gasperi was addressing the National Council of his own Christian Democrats and his flare-up came after the Government's policies had been the target of sharp criticism, originating mostly from the Left-Wingers in the party.

A month later, there was another clash. The Italian Premier was about to announce the formation of his sixth Cabinet, in which Signor Fanfani, a representative of the Christian Democratic Left, was to keep the post of Minister of Labor. The Left-Wingers asked for the Ministry of Industry too. Their request was turned down flat by Signor De Gasperi. Thereupon, Signor Fanfani refused to participate in the new Cabinet and so did his under-secretary, Signor La Pira, also a member of the Christian Democratic Left. As a result, this group is not represented at all in the present Italian Government.

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WHO are those Christian Democrats of the Left and what makes their position within the party so distinctive and so difficult?

They cannot be considered, as yet, a fully articulated group; but they have a program, some leaders and above all a will, an impatience to be up and doing—which is more than you can say of most political outfits today in Italy. They have their headquarters in the apartment of Signor Giuseppe Dossetti, a youngish, professorial-looking Deputy from Reggio Emilia, who is generally recognized as the head of the group. Like most of his friends, Signor Dossetti is less than forty years old, a professor who received his first training in the Catholic Action Youth organizations. It should be pointed out, however, that the Christian Democrats of the Left do not usually agree with the present official line of the Catholic Action movement, in which the influence of its Vice President, Signor Gedda, is now dominant.

In the apartment lives also Signor Giuseppe Glisenti, the editor of *Cronache Sociali,* a fortnightly magazine which is the mouthpiece of the group and one of the best publications of its kind in Italy. A good organizer and a clear thinker, Signor Glisenti is also a young man with a very independent mind; he is not a registered Christian Democrat and of all the members of the group he is probably the least worried at the prospect of turning the group itself some day into a completely independent political outfit.

Another member of the group is the already mentioned Signor La Pira, an earnest reformer and a man of truly evangelical spirit. La Pira gives away to the poor most of the salary he draws as a Deputy and as a professor of Roman Law at the University of Florence. There is Signor Giuseppe Lazzati, a lecturer at the Catholic University of Milan, who is entrusted by the group with many of the organizational tasks. There is, of course, Signor Fanfani who, as indicated above, was until a short time ago Minister of Labor. In that capacity, Signor Fanfani proved himself a strong-willed leader able to get things done (witness the good start made at last on the housing program), but perhaps too much of an individualist to be a really good organizer.

Finally, the Christian Democrats of the Left look upon Signor Pastore, the head of the Catholic Free Confederation of Labor (LCGIL) as a friend and as an ally. They like him as a modern-minded, liberal personality and they consider him a key man in view of the vital role a free trade union movement must play in a truly democratic Italy.

The Left-Wingers' disagreement with the official Christian-Democratic line can be traced back to the days following the general election of April 18, 1948.

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The Christian Democrats had secured almost 50% of the popular vote and an actual majority in the Chamber of Deputies. The Communists had suffered a crushing defeat. The minor parties represented in the Government (Liberals, Republicans and Right-Wing Socialists) also lost some ground.

Those results, however decisive for the future of the country, hardly affected at all the make-up of the Government or its policies. The same four parties continued to be represented in the Cabinet and in most cases by the same men. The same pledges were repeated once more, to wit: enactment of a land reform and of a fiscal reform; overhauling of industry; streamlining of the bureaucracy. And, once more, nothing much happened. Liberals and Right-Wing Socialists found themselves on opposite sides of the fence on most issues and thus effectively neutralized each other. The majority of the Christian Democrats sought only to enjoy the spoils of victory and to entrench themselves in power. De Gasperi himself appeared more concerned with keeping his coalition Government together than with providing the country with an inspired leadership.

It was primarily against this stagnation that the Christian Democrats of the Left have risen up in arms.

At first, their attacks were directed against the minor parties sharing in the Government, with Saragat's moderate Socialists as their favorite target. This, naturally enough, led many people to believe that the Left-Wingers were claiming "all the power for all the Christian Democrats" and that they aimed at supplanting the Social Democrats in the Cabinet.

To a specific query of mine, Signor Dossetti had this to say: "Even after the elections of April 18, we favored continued participation in the Government by the minor parties. Their share, however, should have been more limited—in keeping with their effective strength—but at the same time more concrete. As it happened, they were granted on paper wide powers which they were, in fact, unable to wield."

According to Signor Dossetti, this has been especially true of the moderate Socialists. They were given nominal control of key economic posts, at a time when the need for positive action in this field was particularly urgent. Whatever their qualifications for the task, it is obvious that they couldn't even make a good start without the unqualified support of the Christian Democratic leadership. This support was not forthcoming. By remaining in the Government under these circumstances, Saragat and his friends shared before the country the responsibility for policies which they were unable to influence. They also provided De Gasperi with an argument against criticism from the Left-Wingers in his own party.

"Time and again," Signor Dossetti told me, "the Premier has turned on us saying: 'Why are you asking for things that not even the Social Democrats ask for? Why are you objecting to measures that the Social Democrats accept?'"

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AS THE year 1949 wore on, those exchanges became more frequent. Discussions within the Christian Democratic party centered more and more on economic matters and Signor De Gasperi personally was drawn into the controversy.

In general, the Left-Wingers pointed out that the Premier's favorite tactics could and did work well where political issues were involved; but economic ills only grew worse with delay and deferment. More specifically, the economic policies of the Government were reviewed and appraised in a remarkable series of articles appearing in the September and October issues of *Cronache Sociali*.

The articles acknowledged that the policy of deflation and stringent credit controls inaugurated in late 1947 by Signor Einaudi (at the time, Minister of the Budget) had unquestionably benefitted the country: the danger of runaway inflation had been checked, stabilization of the lira had been achieved, notable progress had been made toward balancing the national budget. But *Cronache Sociali* underlined the price paid for those achievements and questioned the wisdom of clinging to that policy in the face of national and international developments.

The indiscriminate impetus given to exports, without a corresponding increase in imports, kept the Italian economic machine in low gear. It slowed down the rise in the abnormally low standard of living of the Italian people; it also prevented full utilization of ERP aid (Italy lost about $75 million of the 1948-49 allocation and may lose some more in 1949-50). Another consequence was the building up of large credits in "soft" foreign currencies which, as in the case of the pound sterling, might be frozen or collected only at a loss. The accumulation of dollars and gold, however, up to a value of several hundred millions of dollars, might have helped to bolster the Italian lira and may be considered an insurance against a rainy day.

But those reserves might also have been used to make available on the domestic market larger quantities of consumer and capital goods, thus promoting a higher level of investments and economic activity. Higher investments and increased production (through the much needed modernization of the Italian industrial plant) would mean increased employment and increased purchasing power for the Italian workers; they would mean the possibility of cutting down production costs to internationally competitive

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levels; they would also provide the Italian lira with a most firm foundation—that of a soundly expanding economy.

Other important planks of the Left-Wingers' platform—as propounded in *Cronache Sociali* and in the public speeches of their leaders or personally explained by them to this writer—include the following:

a) immediate enforcement of the land reform program, at least to the extent of re-distributing among the peasants idle land from large, uncultivated estates. It is in the South that most of those estates are to be found, alongside with subhuman living conditions for peasants and farm laborers. It is in the South that the pressure to correct those glaring examples of social injustice is greatest, as proven once more by the recent occupation of idle land by land-hungry peasants; and it is in the South—the Left-Wingers insist—that the Christian Democratic party must take immediately a definite stand, disassociating itself from the conservative, monarchist and pro-fascist interests still so very powerful in that part of the country.

b) more active influence by the party through its representatives in Parliament and by Parliament itself on the conduct of affairs. Today, the initiative is left almost wholly to the Government and this excessive burden contributes to a slow down in formulation and enactment of policies.

c) a reorganization of the executive branch. The basic pattern is still the one established as far back as 1870, to which a number of new departments were added haphazardly as the need for them arose. The result is that too many Ministries have vague and conflicting powers over the same issues, especially in the economic field.

d) a streamlining and reorganization of the bureaucracy. During the last ten years or so, almost 400,000 employees have been added to the government payroll, bringing the total to the stupendous figure of 1,100,000. Many of those recent appointees had no special qualifications or training; they were hired and retained to prevent a further swelling of the unemployment rolls.

In the opinion of the Christian Democrats of the Left, the main issue of the hour is still unemployment which, after dropping somewhat from the 1948 peak of over two million, has been hovering for some months around the 1,750,000 mark. And in order to launch a renewed and successful attack upon unemployment, they feel that the entire economic policy of the Government should be revised along the lines illustrated.

Those paramount considerations inspired the program and the demands put forward by the Left-Wingers in connection with the recent Cabinet reshuffle. They pointed at the record of Signor Fanfani, whose building program, after overcoming endless political and bureaucratic difficulties, is now providing tens of thousands of new jobs as well as desperately needed low cost houses for workers. They asked that the policies adopted by Fanfani be extended to other departments, beginning with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. Later on, they indicated, Signor Dossetti himself might be brought into the Cabinet and given the task of stimulating and coordinating an over-all program of investments designed to bolster production and cut down unemployment.

Signor De Gasperi must have considered those proposals too drastic and venturesome. He elected, instead, to add to the Cabinet three Ministries without Portfolio to supervise respectively economic affairs, investments and employment, and the reform of the bureaucracy. To fill the new posts, he called on men who, while sharing some of the economic views of the Left-Wingers, come either from other Christian Democratic groups or from other parties altogether.

The Left-Wingers, in turn, felt that the new Cabinet did not offer sufficient guarantees that a "New Course" in economic affairs would actually be followed; so they elected to withdraw altogether from the Government.

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THIS doesn't mean that they are heading for an open split with De Gasperi or that their representatives in Parliament will vote against the Government. Such a course is ruled out by obvious and overriding considerations of national policy and also by the respect that the leaders of the group, reared in the Catholic Youth organizations, still feel for the Premier and for the Elders in the party. Rather, the Left-Wingers can be expected to pursue vigorously their line of constructive criticism, while further building up their strength within the Christian Democratic party. In the Catholic Youth organizations, among the younger clergymen, in the free labor unions, there are many people who share their outlook and their impatience with the official Christian Democratic line. The problem is, of course, to mobilize and weld those scattered forces into an efficient and powerful instrument of political action.

This task of organization is now first on the agenda of the Christian Democrats of the Left. They are convinced that the present Government will not last very long. Despite De Gasperi's efforts, the coalition based on the so-called "formula of April 18" looks shakier than ever. The Liberals have dropped out of the Cabinet. Saragat's Socialists are weakened and discredited. The Republicans are a group of generals and colonels followed by only a handful of troops. Moreover, the Left-Wingers are convinced that

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within the next few months the need for more positive action will prove even more urgent, especially in economic matters.

Should a new Cabinet crisis arise, they think Signor De Gasperi will not be able to solve it with another round of the old game of musical chairs. The Premier will have to look for a new combination of forces; or he may choose to withdraw and let one of his lieutenants form a Government composed entirely of Christian Democrats. In either case, the "young professors" of the Christian Democratic Left are sure that their group will have an important role to play and this time they mean to be ready to play it to the hilt.

The Stage

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

IF WE ADD up the endless factors composing Elaine Ryan's adaptation of Ludwig Bemelmans' novel, it ought to be possible to arrive at a simple critical conclusion. The cast of fifty, headed by Fredric March and Florence Eldridge, are competent and careful workers; the eight or ten different settings are pure Bemelmans, although designed by Wolfgang Roth; a good deal of tinny music poured from some kind of cheap machine is just that and nothing more. But how to explain that all this, in addition to the most sprawling script I have ever witnessed, amounts to an honestly endearing and delightful evening—I don't know. It certainly doesn't seem to be any special person's fault. I guess we are in the area of gaiety again—gaiety and color—and that such simplicities (witness the Giraudoux and McCullers plays) have astonishingly arrived at a point of value on the big street.

It happens that I'm unfamiliar with this one of Mr. Bemelmans's books and spectators will have to judge for themselves whether justice has been done him in Miss Ryan's version. I can only say that there are at least one hundred Ecuadorians towards the end and as many Frenchmen at the beginning; that Miss Graves' coffin is intact and handsome; that the General's medals and plumes are dazzling; and that the procession of stage pictures is neither more nor less than wonderful. Also, I loved the chef (Henry Lascoe), and the little dog. Hume Cronyn's direction uses a system of staged intervals between the many scenes. This is a device borrowed from ballet and the musical schemes, and I wish it could be borrowed more often and even written in. It's smart stuff. Mr. March and Miss Eldridge appear to be having a fine time, but not more so, I think, than any of the others. (*at the Broadhurst*) KAPPO PHELAN.

The Screen

Here We Go Again

ALL right, if it's rough stuff and violence you like in movies, here's a brace of new films filling that requirement. *"The Outriders,"* which can be classified as a western, has one distinct advantage over most outdoor melodramas: it has an interesting and novel plot. This story and screenplay by Irving Ravetch may remind you of John Ford's famous "Stagecoach" because it involves a group of people on a long, cross-country journey. In this case, however, the leader (Joel McCrea) knows that he is leading his fellow riders over 800 perilous miles and right into a trap. Since this is during the Civil War and Joel is a loyal Southerner, he hopes that the large amount of gold hidden in one of the wagons will go into Lee's dwindling coffers. His conscience is bothered somewhat by the fact that all these people, including the man in charge of the gold (Ramon Navarro), an ailing priest, the only woman in the group (beautiful Arlene Dahl) and her young brother-in-law (Claude Jarman, Jr.) will meet certain death at the ambush. And his problems are increased during the course of the trek when he learns that Lee has already surrendered to Grant and that the men with whom he is working in pulling off the big robbery never intended to turn the gold over to the Southern cause. Joel is further embarrassed by the presence of a buddy (Barry Sullivan) who is is on the deal and who hopes to get his share of the loot. Director Roy Rowland successfully dramatizes these problems before some very beautiful scenery in Technicolor. Strangely enough the film misses a few of the opportunities for suspense in failing to give us close-ups of the people concerned; but in the big scenes with the Indians, or crossing the swollen river, and in the final ambush, the excitement is terrific.

"Under My Skin" dishes up a lot of violence too; but since Producer Casey Robinson wrote the script from an Ernest Hemingway short story, this is to be expected—and so is the sentiment. The movie extends the story ("My Old Man") considerably and has added characters, but they are still Hemingway people: casual, careless and unafraid of life and death. Your heart is supposed to bleed for this unscrupulous jockey (John Garfield) who cheats right and left but in his own way loves his motherless son (Orley Lindgren) and the cafe singer (Micheline Prelle) who befriends him and comes back for more after each dirty deal. My eyes became slightly moist during the big scene in which the jockey, knowing that the racketeer (Luther Adler) he double-crossed would get revenge, sends his son to America for safety; but at the finale I was coldly unconvinced that this heel was "a great jockey, a great guy who died winning." Perhaps Director Jean Negulesco and everyone else connected with this film were a little too overawed by Heming-

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way's stature as a literary figure. They treated his story with too much respect; they decorated it with handsome backgrounds of Paris and racetracks in Italy and France; and the cast is excellent. But at the end one asks "So what?" and wonders if sometimes Hemingway's masterful violence, smothering sentiment and clipped sentences shouldn't be left to the printed page.

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BLACK HAND" is as rough and tough as its title suggests, and Director Richard Thorpe squeezes every scare he can out of the situations created by these early 1900 Italian gangsters in American cities. I can't vouch for the inadequacy of the police as the film portrays them in those days, but their problems were greatly increased by the fact that the victims of the vicious Italians always refused to testify. Gene Kelly portrays an Italian-American whose father was brutally murdered by these pre-Capone mobsters and who is bent on a one-man vendetta. He finally works with the police and especially with a detective (J. Carrol Naish) who really gets some dope on the Black Handers when he goes to Italy to track down clues. Unfortunately the Mafia polish him off there, but Kelly is able to continue his work in this country. "Black Hand" is a well-made film, but you'll find it pretty grim as it shows that those on the side of justice very often suffer greatly to prove that crime does not pay.

An Italian import, with English subtitles, carries a similar theme. Except for the fact that *"Mafia"* was photographed in Sicily and has some interesting shots of its unattractive locale, this film has little more to offer than our own good-versus-bad thrillers. A new judge arrives, tangles with the Mafia whose idea of justice is strictly their own, and finally establishes law and order. This material has been handled again and again with more speed and prettier scenery in our westerns about unlawful vigilantes.

Although *"Borderline"* is slow in getting started, it makes up for its leisurely pace with a macabre toughness that is accentuated by surprising touches of humor. Because of an unusual twist to its plot (which you will probably guess anyway) I can't go into details of its story. Fred MacMurray and Claire Trevor find themselves in Mexico involved in smuggling narcotics. Villain Raymond Burr gives them no rest; and the chases, fisticuffs and sudden jabs of satire in the midst of horror scenes will keep you on the edge of your chair.

Most of the violence in *"Perfect Strangers"* happens before the start of this picture which is about a jury hearing the evidence on a man accused of murder. Anyone who has ever served on a jury will recognize the types included in this particular twelve and will agree that the details in the film are extremely well done. The nervous feeling of strain that comes with being locked up for weeks with total strangers is expertly portrayed. But the part of the plot which concerns Juror No. 3 (Dennis Morgan) falling in love with Juror No. 5 (Ginger Rogers) is so absurd and written down to the ten-year-old level that it spoils the whole movie. Both 3 and 5 are married, and although 5 is separated from her husband, we have every reason to believe that until 3 met 5, he was a happily married man and what's more the father of two little girls. Not in the least does the film make plausible how 3 and 5 could consider marriage to each other. Case dismissed. Let's forget all 12.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Of Note

Church Goods

THE following excerpts are from an address delivered by Miss Bernice Fitz-Gibbon to the convention in January of the American Association of Catholic Publishers and Dealers in Church Goods. Miss Fitz-Gibbon is the Publicity Director of Gimbel Brothers department store.

> I have spent the last 30 years in 4 department stores, Marshall Field's, Macy's, Wanamaker's, and Gimbels—and I have learned one lesson. Good taste will outsell bad taste. I submit that the vast majority of religious articles now being produced are of atrocious design and execution. They are neither artistic nor religious. What articles do I include? Practically everything you people sell. Holy pictures, statues, framed prayers, Christmas cards, monstrances, chalices. Even the average church altar is an architectural monstrosity of Connemara green marble, with bloated cherubs in pink and gold tossing about garlands of Gothic flowers —an abomination, I am sure, in the eyes of the Lord. Of course, you people probably aren't responsible for church architecture and decoration—or are you, indirectly? . . .
>
> Almost every [religious goods] display window, which purports to be edifying and uplifting, is in reality a *whoopee in excelsis*. A devout friend of mine says: "Don't get so stirred up about these things. When you say your prayers, shut your eyes so you won't see them, and then they won't bother you."
>
> Let's take up statues of the saints. I think you'll agree that nobody could achieve sainthood who wasn't a robust, tough character. Yet the saints are almost always portrayed as insipid, sappy, and simpering. Certainly John the Baptist (see Maldarelli's modern sculpture of Saint John the Baptist) should look like a towering oak—not like an old moss-beard with a mawkishly sentimental expression. And please observe the statues of the Little

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Flower—she is spilling roses all over the south side of 32nd street; I'll wager she rues the day she ever mentioned roses. Incidentally, speaking of roses, have you seen a photograph of the magnificent modern sculpture of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary by Henry Kreis? He gives her a lapful of roses—but, ah, the difference! Even roses needn't simper. . . .

Don't be afraid of the modern. Isn't it really a little silly to be living always out of one's era? Some people are frightened at what is being done in their own life-time. They feel "safer" if they have the seal of approval of a former century. They are the people who crawl into the little low-ceilinged early American houses, teeter on thin little Hitchcock chairs, and place a hitching post in front of their modern garages. Certainly if you are living in your own era, in tune with the *here* and *now*, your home should be filled not with chairs by Chippendale or the Brothers Adam but with free flowing functional pieces of the *here* and *now*. Undoubtedly, there was a timid group in Shakespeare's times, who wouldn't be caught dead at one of his plays.

Don't be afraid of the new. Early in the 18th century the waltz was considered so immoral that a proper young thing would hesitate to dance it for fear of losing her reputation. In the 19th century, croquet was considered downright wicked. As one prim writer warned, "Croquet often leads to things."

A lot of people look at modern or contemporary design as Churchill spoke of Russia—"an enigma wrapped in a mystery and rolled up in a riddle". Well, even if you can't understand it, don't be agin it—I mean Modern, not Russia. The great modern architect, Louis Sullivan, who worked for years with Frank Lloyd Wright, has this to say about modern banks that are built today on the lines of Roman temples: "Roman temples were all right—with the ancient Romans they were apropos. But I do not relish Roman temple banks . . . Such things are false enough when done in the spirit of the highest, most careful, most industrious scholarship. But as for this bargain-Friday performance, this commercial smear, what is to be said, other than in terms befitting so crumpled and soiled a product. . . ."

El Greco and Cezanne and Van Gogh were considered madmen—now we know they were towering geniuses. . . . .

Remember—people say *they know what they like.* But they don't—*they like what they know.* Which is quite a different thing. I grew up on a farm in the Middle West where everybody put sugar on tomatoes. Sugar on tomatoes is a culinary crime; as anybody will realize who is confronted often enough with good cooking. Taste *can* change. Confront your public with enough imaginative fresh creative modern designs and they will love them.

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Man Versus Scientism

Alan Devoe

FROM the hour of man's coming into being as man, he looks about him at his universe (wherein is included the figure of himself) with a number of suppositions so sure and so apparently spontaneous that philosophers used to say he held these immediate knowledges by Primary Intuition. He feels himself to *be* a self, which is to say a mysterious indwelling and organizing being at the core of personality, linked with the body but not to be identified with it. He feels that this *anima* exercises will and freedom. He reads a similar *anima* into his fellow-men (and, likely enough, at the earliest stages, also into trees and hawks); and in the light of this reading he entertains ideas of responsibility. Spirit is real to him, as by an immediacy; and he stares at the living, breathing stuff of creation-in-process. What comes naturally to man, in a word, is the supernatural.

This being so, it is native to man to think in a literary way, a mythopoetic way. He is moralist, symbolist, and dreamer. He is caught up in a drama of things; and he undertakes to make it an intelligible drama, fitted to the nature of his being as he understands it. He poses a Why?; and he answers that Why in terms of his primary vision of himself. He becomes Religious Man, speaking of Garden and Fall. He becomes Legal Man, fixing responsibilities, guilts, punishments. He is man worshiping, singing, loving, hating, laughing, weeping, hoping, despairing, beseeching in prayer. This is Man, the Human Animal: the warm, pulsing, living, infinitely lovable, infinitely miserable, fellow himself. We all know him. For we are all, in the incurable heart of us, himself.

Now the creature Man, as thus defined and understood, may also be labeled with yet another label. He is Pre-Scientific Man. He is the Man who has not yet paid much more than casual attention to the possibilities lying in the particular kind of exact, objective knowledge called *scientia.*

It is only a very little while ago, speaking in long-range terms of our race's history, that man began inquiring into life by those techniques that are now called the Scientific Method. What is that method? Books have been written to define and expound it; but the general temper and quality of the thing are easily enough indicated. The practitioner of the Scientific Method, firmly rejecting subjectivity, and committing himself (ideally) to absolute honesty of mind, absence of dogmatic prejudice, and concern solely to find truth, devotes himself to examining what can be accurately observed and quantitatively measured; and he looks to find the truth by the careful formulation of hypothesis and then the hard, honest testing of that hypothesis by experiment. Science is objectivity and science is measurement; and it is committed to rigorous exactness of thought and precision of language.

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WHEN man began applying this scientific method of inquiry to his world, he at once found problems unlocking themselves to his touch, riddles dissolving with wonderful speed, and tools of fantastic power becoming available to his experimental hand. It is only a few racial minutes, a few racial seconds, from Newton and Galileo to Einstein, Oppenheimer and the H-Bomb. By the power of science and the scientific method, we have become learned, skilled and masterful in a thousand realms where Pre-Scientific Man was ignorant, incompetent, and wholly frail under the crush of circumstance.

It is easy enough to see, by hindsight, that these enormous accomplishments of science—pride being what it is—must almost surely have led to that exaltation and near-deifying of science that is properly to be called Scientism. It is easy enough to see, just by looking around us, that they have in fact done so. Science started by limiting its study, properly and necessarily, to the measurable, the checkable, the laboratory-testable. In the flush of success and self-esteem over what such study has disclosed, it has been more and more emboldened to say that the kinds of things it studies are the *only* things there are, the method it uses is the *only* method of knowledge, the truth it finds is the *whole* of truth. So abject has become public respect for science, so overawed the plain man by science's mystifying technicalities and obviously immense successes, that it has come to be uneasily granted that science must have a sort of monopoly upon intelligence. What is outside science must be worthless knowledge, at best, and more probably disgusting superstition. Science has at its command a contemptuous term: "layman." That is a mighty silencer. It has also at its command a terrible anathema: "unscientific." Hurled from the On High of science, the cry of "unscientific!" can send the stoutest "layman" quailing away in ignominy and shame. Science is no longer just science: a particular method of inquiring into particular aspects of the truth. It *is* Truth. It is Orthodoxy, Right-Mindedness, the End-All and The Way. It is a Sacred Cow.

Poor old Man, the original fellow, the one who loves his wife much more than he could ever love a lump of matter, and who has a persistent in-the-bones conviction that the *anima* is at least as real as the aldehydes, and who notices that everybody (including scientists) acts daily on the assumption that will is real and that freedom is real and that intellection is not merely a set of responsive twitchings like something going on in the hind leg of a galvanized frog—poor old Man, that Pre-Scientific Carry-Over, that Lay-Man, cannot but bow

---

ALAN DEVOE *writes extensively on natural science, on "man's dual role as at once part of nature and apart from it." He is the author of "Down to Earth" and "Speaking of Animals".*

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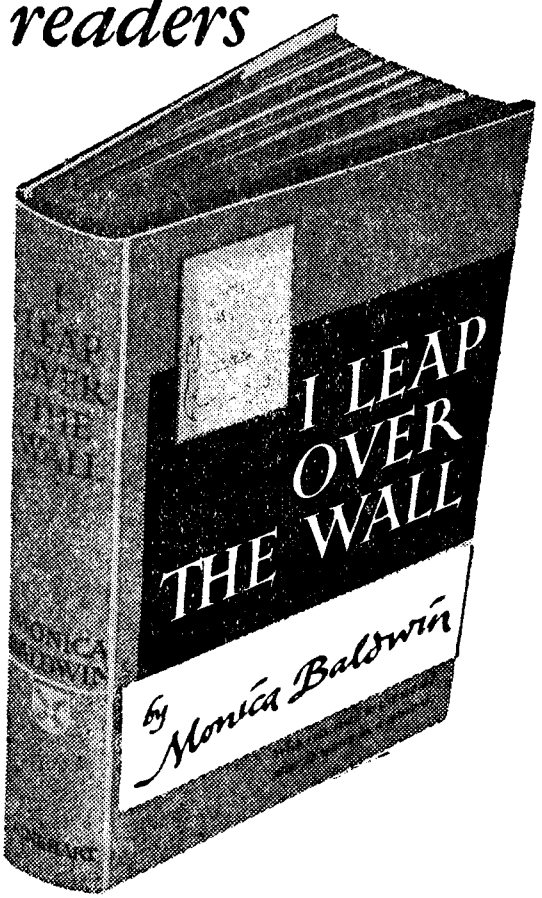

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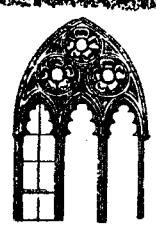

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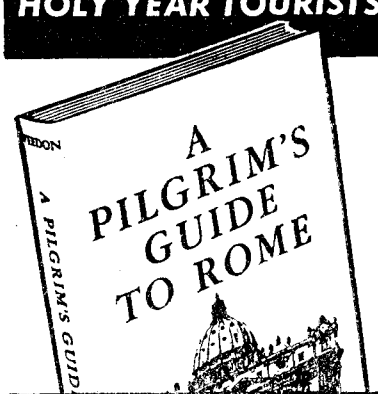

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SPECIAL ISSUES OF THE COMMONWEAL
APRIL 15 — EDUCATION
MAY 5 — SPRING BOOKS

down before the Sacred Cow, but he does it with troubled misgiving. Sometimes he feels stirrings of anger. Sometimes he feels that science is doubtless all very scientific, but, well—what about *common sense*? Sometimes he looks into the eyes of one he loves, or he stares up at the heavens, or he searches his heart, and there occurs to him the treasonous thought that the most real realities, the most tremendous truths, are precisely what science *omits*. Sometimes, in the watches of the night, he reads a piece of scientific prose and is barely in time to suppress the awful cry, "Why, this fellow is a *boob*."

★

ALL these "laymen's" misgivings, these largely unformulated and inarticulated protests against the progress of science into tyrannic Scientism, do not of course trouble science at all. For in public, at least, the worship of the Sacred Cow is exemplary. True, here and there a philosopher or theologian writes a little book of thoughtful objections. But who reads philosophers and theologians? True, here and there a simple-minded layman opens his mouth briefly to ask, "Yes, but just how has science 'disproved' spirits?"; but such a one can be slapped down in a trice with one cry of "unscientific." There has arisen no man with the gall, the impudence, the learning, the sheer exuberant brass, to subject Scientism to a contemptuous public going-over in the spirit of one having a hearty laugh at pompous asininity.

In the person of Mr. Anthony Standen—a chemical scientist, a fiercely logical thinker, a slangily humorous writer, and possibly the most intrepid man of the century—he has now arisen; and he has laughed. (*Science is a Sacred Cow. Anthony Standen. Dutton.* $2.75.) "Horse-laugh" might say it better. For all its inelegance, "belly-laugh" might say it better yet. Mr. Standen is extremely funny. He is also, at bottom, deadly serious. He is out to swing one grand rollicking round-house punch at Scientism, simultaneously knocking it groggy and leaving the audience howling with such merriment that they will never again be able to read the mystical words "Science conclusively shows . . ." without doubling up in a healthy fit of the giggles.

As commentator upon the Sacred Cow, Mr. Standen operates at three levels, or, if you like, attacks Chaplin-style from three directions. First, and most importantly, he is concerned to say that science has authority in only a very restricted field of total truth; and that when it steps outside this it should instantly have its ears pinned back. (Mr. Standen loves slang, and uses it with a walloping relish.) Thus far is the Scientific Method competent, and no farther. Second, he is concerned to show that a vast lot of science isn't scientific at all: its thought not logical, its language not precise, its observation not exact, its experiments not sound, its conclusions not truly tested. Finally, he is concerned to say that unless the Sacred Cow is very, very carefully watched, it is inexorably going to take over poor old Man—the poor old Pre-Scientific Original, the one with the soul, the one with freedom, the one with love and God—and turn him into a *thing*. Science loves *things*. It can control them and

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mold them and master them. It can push them around.

A comptometer could scarcely register the number of times that Mr. Standen, during the coming months, is going to be called "irresponsible." How many times he is going to be proved mistaken or illogical, however, is something very much else. In the meanwhile, it may confidently be expected, there is going to be a great swelling of sound in our land. It will be the chucklings and thigh-slappings and heart-warmed guffawings of great myriads of readers who belong to the race of the Everlasting Man, the *human* man, the one with the soul and the freedom. It will be a lovely sound to hear.

Books

Fundamental Moral Attitudes. Dietrich von Hildebrand. Longmans. $1.75.

A MAN is rich in values, is a personality in the highest sense of the word, to the degree that he perceives values and possesses a spiritual vision clear and open to the fulness of the world of values, above all to the world of supernatural values; to the degree that the gift of himself to the realm of values is pure and absolute, and above all the self-surrender to Christ and through Christ to God." Thus, in *Liturgy and Personality,* Dietrich von Hildebrand has stated the idea of the Christian personality, and it is in the same terms that he discusses the relation between personality and morality in *Fundamental Moral Attitudes.*

It is the response to natural values which forms the basic moral attitudes—reverence ("the mother of all moral life"), faithfulness, awareness of responsibility, veracity and goodness—which have endured in human nature, and without which obedience to the law becomes merely technical. Professor von Hildebrand significantly speaks of *attitudes,* not of virtues or qualities, since it is in the attitude, or response, to being, that the virtues may be most truly and permanently realized. Thus the virtue of truthfulness is outraged in a lie, because "in such an affirmation there is a revolt against the dignity of being as such, an irreverent arrogance, and disregard of the fundamental obligation to conform to being."

In his discussion of each fundamental moral attitude Professor von Hildebrand classifies the human types which either embody, deviate from, or pervert the true response to being. These basic human types are not psychological nor even theological classifications; they are spiritual types (or metaphysical types, in somewhat the same sense that Berdyaev uses the term in classifying the bourgeois mind) in which personality is achieved or degraded, according to the degree of response to or neglect of values; types, moreover, that have been instinctively recognized throughout human history.

Fundamental Moral Attitudes is a series of gentle essays on true sanctity which manages to disengage the

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Most of us would have without the slightest hesitation; *she* stayed inside and became a saint. It's St. Therese of Lisieux we are talking about; if you think you know all about her, read **STORM OF GLORY** ($3) by **John Beevers** and enjoy discovering how wrong you were. Much of the material he used had never been used before *and* he wrote the book because he was "sick to death of hearing St. Therese branded as the Little Flower and made a victim of a lot of sentimental gush." If you read her **COLLECTED LETTERS** ($3.75) published last Fall, you are probably already a bit suspicious of all that syrup.

But if *she* didn't leap over the wall, our shipping department is getting into a state when it will leap out of the window if we don't watch it. (We do watch it.) The trouble is that when we remarked hopefully that we thought **Father Trese's VESSEL OF CLAY** ($2) would be popular, we had no idea what an understatement it was. It looks as if we have got a best seller on our hands, and no fooling. If the **Knox OLD TESTAMENT,** Vol. II ($5) wasn't trying to be a best seller too, or if **Lucile Hasley's REPROACHFULLY YOURS** ($2.25) would only stop selling more and more every week, it wouldn't be so desperate. Don't worry about it too much: all we really mean is if the books you ordered from us are a day or so late in arriving, please try not to be angry, we'll get our breath and catch up any day now.

ON MARCH 17th

we published a good but singularly inappropriate book, **THE DRAMA OF ATHEIST HUMANISM** ($4) by **Henri de Lubac.** It is well-named—the way the world moved away from God with Feuerbach and Marx, Comte and Nietzsche, and began to turn back to him with Dostoievski, who was not thinking of movements at all, but of good stories, *is* dramatic. Well, St. Patrick probably won't mind.

You can get any of these books from a bookstore, but if you want to write to us instead, be sure to send your order to **Lucy MacGill.** She will see you get it with the least possible delay.

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idea of sanctity from perverted notions of morality; one could only wish them less gentle, and more intellectually and critically active among the many problems which their intrinsic truths suggest. J. H. JOHNSTON.

Christianity after Freud. B. G. Sanders. Macmillan. $1.75.

THE subtitle reads: "An interpretation of Christian experience in the light of psycho-analytic theory." The author is an Anglican clergyman. He argues that even if the psychological doctrine of Freud were to be wholly accepted, Christian faith would not be touched at all, and would in no way be disproved. He starts by pointing out that the attitude of Freud and his followers concerning religion in general and the Christian faith in particular does not result from their psychological theories, but precedes them. All that is said about religion in psychoanalytic literature rests on the presupposition that God does not exist. Freud is therefore guilty of circular reasoning, in so far as he claims to prove what in truth he assumes. This is correct.

One wonders that the author did not discover the presence and the effect of the same logical fallacy in other parts of the psychoanalytic doctrine. However, he thinks that one has to consider the wide acceptance of Freud's ideas and show to those who accept them that they are not thereby committed to a rejection of the tenets of the faith.

One must keep in mind, when following the reasonings of the author, that he believes unreservedly in the teachings of the Anglican Church. He accepts without any doubt the doctrines of Christ's divinity, the virginal birth (though not, of course, the Immaculate Conception), original sin, and so on. Original sin, or the Fall, appears in psychoanalytic theories as the murder of the patriarch by his sons. Mr. Sanders is quite aware of the criticisms which have been raised on the part of cultural anthropologists against this particular theory. But he submits it as true for the sake of his argument.

Starting from the assumption that the person against whom the primeval crime was committed was not the patriarch, the author employs all the procedures of psychoanalysis, as contained chiefly in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism,* or in Reik's book on *Ritual,* to show that the facts of Revelation and Redemption are compatible with Freud's ideas. Mr. Sanders' undertaking is interesting. Whether his plan will prove effective is doubtful. It may be good tactics to replace an attack on the whole front, as he suggests, by one directed against one particular position of the enemy, but it is questionable whether much is to be gained by making use of a theory which is intrinsically false.

The logical error which the author justly points out is not the only one. Why, then, should one be at pains to prove such an agreement? "Christianity after Freud" will do better to remain what it has been "before Freud."

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There is, it would seem, not much reason for such an attempt to justify Christian faith before the tribunal of psychoanalysis. It is even to be feared that this book will do more harm than good. It will encourage many people in their trust in psychoanalysis, not only as a medical doctrine, but as a philosophy of human nature. It is hardly possible to reconcile the whole of Freudian doctrine with Christian philosophy or faith, because the system of psychoanalysis is thoroughly materialistic and stands and falls with this metaphysics. RUDOLF ALLERS.

The Perfect Invader. Robert Burns. Bobbs-Merrill. $3.00.

A STORY that combines violent action with strong philosophical overtones is not an easy thing to handle. Very often what a young novelist intends to be philosophy is more like politics, and the action, with which he is probably better acquainted, frequently becomes a convenient escape when the speculative waters get too deep and muddy. Robert Burns has put the two elements together successfully, if not perfectly, in a first novel that merits more than the routine "shows great promise" notice, since it can stand on its own as an interesting, exciting book.

Sergeant Bannon, a 20-year old American infantry sergeant, finds himself at the end of the war an unofficial military governor in absolute control of a small, sleepy Austrian town. Although he is apparently a Catholic, Bannon's conception of God, and the relation of society and the individual to Him, is a harsh one, tinged with the darker strains of heresies that once flourished in the country he had just helped to conquer. He has a kind of savage faith, a blind hope, but is completely without charity. No margin for error is allowed, no incongruity permitted, in what he considers the foreordained order of things. Within this structure of belief he is driven by some rudimentary aesthetic sense toward an ideal of pure beauty beyond the commonplace things of life. Whatever impedes this drive must be ruthlessly put aside.

Thrown into the middle of the minor, chaotic, post-war cross-currents that run through the town, Bannon takes on the role of the fierce, unloving, relentless god he acknowledges without worshiping. On one of these currents is Anne, a charming, pretty Hungarian girl, who had come to Austria with her father, a general in retreat from the Russians. Bannon idealizes her into the goal of perfect beauty for which he yearns. Other currents bring a variety of characters who must inevitably clash with the imperious sergeant and his rigorous code. The clashes are swift and fierce and bring a tragic climax.

Burns writes tersely, but without abruptness, so that the narrative moves rapidly and easily, and leaves an after-impression of great power, carefully restrained. Perhaps a little less restraint would have resulted in a better characterization of Bannon as a more complex human rather than the cold personification of an idea. The philosophical and moral issues Burns touches on are as

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numerous as they are profound, and there too, his attempts at being cryptic are sometimes only confusing. But this 25-year old novelist has many books before him, and *The Perfect Invader* is a fine portent, we hope, of what is to come. PAUL FARRELL.

England Reclaimed and Other Poems. Osbert Sitwell. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $2.75.
In Noah's Ark. Rumer Godden. Viking. $2.50.

TWO writers celebrated for their prose take a pluck at the lyre, but only one extracts much music from it. Miss Godden, whose novels are well spoken of by competent judges, will hardly win many new readers by her cute fable telling how Pegasus wangled his way aboard Noah's Ark, disturbed the other animals, and turned the stolid Ham into a poet. Her pedestrian free verse altogether lacks the condensation and tension necessary to make it poetry. One remembers Pound's dictum: "Poetry ought to be at least as well-written as prose."

Sir Osbert Sitwell, however, has served a long apprenticeship to poetry, and his present volume is a selection from his work of the past thirty years. More than half the book is devoted to the series of character sketches of English lower-middle-class life which made such a hit when read aloud by him during his recent tour of this country. Their charm is all on the surface; they are affectionate, whimsical, gently satiric, couched in lucid, swiftly-moving free verse, every word of which should be immediately understandable when read aloud. One feels, however, that the aristocratic Sir Osbert has no understanding whatever of the inner life of his characters—indeed, he hardly seems to believe that they have an inner life. They are to him baroque bits of period furniture, and nothing more.

The second group of poems evokes scenes from his album of travel memories and includes "On the Coast of Coromandel," a poem very reminiscent of his sister's early work. The volume concludes with "Poems of the Wars," mainly in the satiric vein common to all the poets of World War I. On the whole, this book will be of more interest to the Sitwell fan than to the reader who likes poetry for its own sake. VIVIAN MERCIER.

Illustrated English Social History. Vol. I. Chaucer's England and the Early Tudors. G. M. Trevelyan. Longmans. $3.75.

ORIGINALLY published here eight years ago, Trevelyan's social study of Chaucerian-Tudor England is now re-issued as the first of an illustrated series of four volumes. Social history is defined negatively as, by and large, "the history of a people with the politics left out." The illustrations chosen for this kind of history are authentic and superb: taken, as far as possible, from early manuscripts and other sources contemporary with the scenes they represent, there are reproductions of playbills, book illustrations, maps, famous portraits, caricatures and advertisements. They add another dimension, not simply a diversion, to an already rich text. Here are imaginative history and book-making at their best, because throughout, Mr. Trevelyan and the editors stick close to the author's ground rule: "Truth is the criterion of historical study; but its impelling motive is poetic. Its poetry consists in its being true. There we find the synthesis of the scientific and literary views of history."

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RUDOLF ALLERS, professor of Psychology at Georgetown University, is the author of *Psychology of Character, Self-Improvement,* and *The Successful Error.*

PAUL FARRELL, who was an Army officer in the ETO, is now an editor for Conover-Mast Publications in New York City.

VIVIAN MERCIER is collaborating on an anthology of the Celtic revival. He teaches at the City College of New York, and at Columbia.

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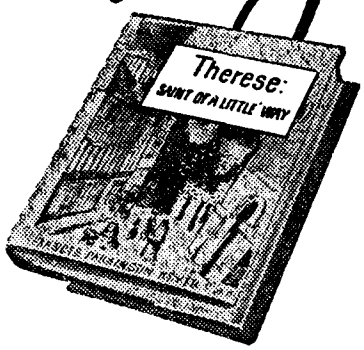


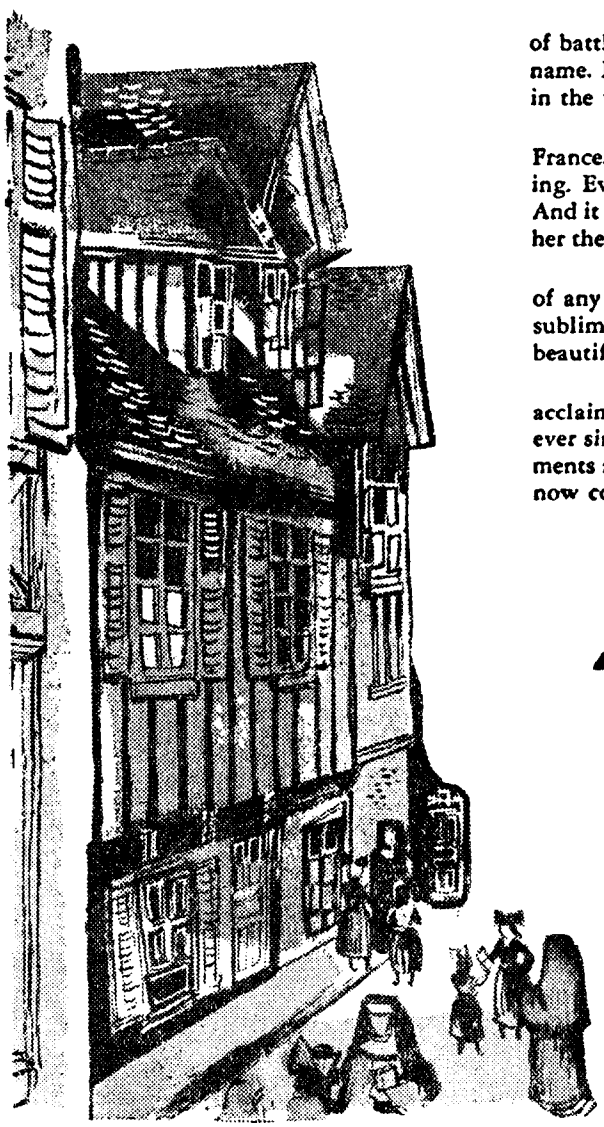
THIS is the book that brings to all people an intimate picture of St. Therese, the Little Flower of Lisieux, who lived only 53 years ago . . . the unassuming "Soldier's Saint", whose Little Way of sanctity through simplicity and kindness has brought peace of mind to men and women of every faith throughout the modern world.

They call her the "Man's Saint" She appeared to soldiers in the field of battle. Entire regiments were dedicated to her. Fighting airplanes bore her name. For in this young girl from Normandy were the qualities that men find in the women they venerate most.

Therese of Lisieux ranks with Joan of Arc as Secondary Patroness of France. Yet her life story contains no mighty actions, no historic deeds of daring. Even her martyrdom was unspectacular, sublimely simple like her life. And it is the very simplicity of Therese Martin's "Little Way" that has brought her the devotion of so many who seek inner comfort in a tormented world.

The "Little Way" of St. Therese is not beyond the skill and strength of any of us to follow—at least in some small degree. It is to make clear the sublime simplicity of her example that Mrs. Keyes wrote this tender and beautiful biography.

THERESE: *Saint of A Little Way* was originally published and widely acclaimed under the title of *Written in Heaven*, and has been in steady demand ever since. But recent events in French history, and the discovery of new documents and source materials, indicated a revised version—which Mrs. Keyes has now completed, and which we are proud to publish to mark the Holy Year.



This book bears the Imprimatur of
Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop, New York

Therese:

SAINT OF A LITTLE WAY

By Frances Parkinson Keyes

Author of DINNER AT ANTOINE'S, THE RIVER ROAD, and CAME A CAVALIER

Just published. Illustrated with photographs. $3.00 at all bookstores

Julian Messner

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